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ACS AND CUNY PARTNERSHIP HAS PROVIDED FIRST-RATE TRAINING AND COURSES TO MORE THAN 5,500 CHILD WELFARE AND JUVENILE JUSTICE STAFF WORKING TO KEEP NYC CHILDREN SAFE

NEW YORK, NY – The New York City Administration for Children’s Services (ACS) released data showing the significant impact of the ACS Workforce Institute since its creation in 2016. More than 5,500 individuals — nearly half of those working in child welfare and juvenile justice in New York City — completed 20,300-plus professional development courses at the ACS Workforce Institute during the last fiscal year.

Developed by Mayor Bill de Blasio, the Workforce Institute is a partnership between ACS, the CUNY School of Professional Studies (CUNY SPS) and the Hunter College Silberman School of Social Work to provide professional development opportunities and support for direct service staff and supervisors working within the city’s child welfare and juvenile justice sectors.

“Providing robust training to the human services workforce is critical to ensuring that children, youth and families across New York City are safe and supported,” said **ACS Commissioner David A. Hansell**. “In just the few years since its creation, the ACS Workforce Institute has trained thousands of ACS and non-profit provider staff through our on-site courses and has enabled hundreds of ACS staff to receive higher education degrees, including many in social work. I thank Mayor de Blasio for prioritizing the Workforce Institute, and I thank CUNY for their continued partnership in delivering cutting-edge learning tools to our thousands of juvenile justice and child welfare staff.”

“As a former Cabinet Secretary of Puerto Rico’s Department of Family Services, I know all too well how critical it is to provide top-notch professional skill development and educational opportunities for the City’s human services workforce so they can better accomplish their goal of supporting the residents and families of New York,” said **CUNY Chancellor Félix V. Matos Rodríguez**. “The participation of CUNY SPS and Hunter College in the ACS Workforce Institute exemplifies CUNY’s unmatched effectiveness in educating and enriching the lives of New Yorkers, including our role as a premier workforce training partner. City and state agencies, and companies in the private sector, have long turned to CUNY to provide workforce training, and we are always available to fill that need.”

Continuing Education

The Workforce Institute offers free instructor-led and online programs, developed in partnership between ACS and the City University of New York, to better equip ACS and contract provider staff with a variety of with the skills they need to support children, youth and families. Moreover, licensed social workers at ACS and contract provider agencies have the opportunity to obtain continuing education credits necessary for their license by taking these courses. Since its creation, the Workforce Institute has developed a total of 49 courses (both in-person, and online) which over 5,500 learners have taken to date.

“I have enjoyed the Workforce Institute classroom experience and find their trainings to be interesting and very interactive. Being with my colleagues in the classroom has been enlightening and the classroom experience allows me to use skills I have learned to guide others in their work and help them find their own answers,” said Carmen Sanchez, LCSW, who works in the ACS Division of Prevention Services and is a learner in the Advanced Coaching Program at the Workforce Institute.

The Workforce Institute also offers a range of Motivational Interviewing courses, including some that focus specifically on families with repeat involvement in the child welfare system, including fathers, girls, and young women and more. The programs use role playing and other engaging activities to provide learners with an interactive “hands-on” experience that promotes learning and transfer of skills to on-the-job behavior.

The CUNY SPS Office of Professional Education and Workplace Learning manages the design, development, and on-going implementation of the Institute’s online and in-classroom learning programs, which includes a comprehensive catalog of foundation-level, advanced, and targeted training to support NYC child welfare and juvenile justice staff. CUNY SPS also provides more than half of the training staff for the Workforce Institute.

Some of the courses developed with the help of CUNY SPS and currently available to ACS and contract provider agency staff include:

- Safety and Risk: Investigation, Synthesis, and Assessment
- Building Coaching Competency
- Engaging Parents with Cognitive and Other Developmental Limitations
- Trauma and How it Impacts the Brain, Development and Behavior
- Child Sexual Abuse: Protective Strategies
- Applying the Mental Health Principles
- Identifying and Addressing Intimate Partner Violence
- Include, Empower and Affirm: Providing Culturally Competent Services for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning (LGBTQ) Youth in ACS Care

Another important component of the ACS Workforce Institute includes the SKIP initiative—Supporting Knowledge Into Practice (SKIP). Managed by the Hunter College Silberman School of Social Work, SKIP is responsible for implementing, evaluating, and continuously improving transfer of learning strategies for the ACS Workforce Institute. This includes supporting supervisors and managers in the Division of Child Protection and Division of Youth and Family Justice to increase their consistent and competent use of the coaching skills and process and supporting the on-the-job learning component of Child Protective Specialist Practice Core and conducting ongoing learner assessments.

Understanding and Undoing Implicit Bias

ACS is committed to addressing racial disproportionality in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems. In 2018, as part of a series of strategies to address this issue, the Workforce Institute launched a new learning program to help employees better understand implicit bias and undo its damaging effects. The program consists of an eLearning module that focuses on interactions

with colleagues, as well as a follow-up instructor-led training that focuses on how implicit bias influences interactions with the youth and families served by ACS.

About CUNY

The City University of New York is the nation's largest urban public university, a transformative engine of social mobility that is a critical component of the lifeblood of New York City. Founded in 1847 as the nation's first free public institution of higher education, CUNY today has [seven community colleges](#), [11 senior colleges](#), and [seven graduate or professional institutions](#) spread across New York City's five boroughs, serving 500,000 students of all ages and awarding 55,000 degrees each year. CUNY's mix of quality and affordability propels almost six times as many low-income students into the middle class and beyond as all the Ivy League colleges combined. More than 80 percent of the University's graduates stay in New York, contributing to all aspects of the city's economic, civic and cultural life and diversifying the city's workforce in every sector. CUNY's graduates and faculty have received many prestigious honors, including 13 Nobel Prizes and 26 MacArthur "Genius" Grants. The University's historic mission continues to this day: provide a first-rate public education to all students, regardless of means or background.

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